



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Hotline lights up as pollen makes annual appearance

BATON ROUGE – As Spring approaches and more and more plants begin to bloom, the Department of Environmental Quality hotline begins to heat up as much as the weather.

Each year as Spring nears, citizens call the DEQ hotline to report a strange yellow substance that is staining their cars, homes or yellow sheens in puddles after rains. Callers who were concerned that the foreign matter might be a health hazard inundated the DEQ hotline on Thursday after a front blew through the state and brought rain to many areas.

Recent drought conditions in Louisiana have contributed to increased amounts of pollen released into the wind. Trees especially Live Oaks are the largest contributors of pollen releases this time of year. Expect to see pollen along roadsides and pools of water for the next several weeks.

This is the time of year when vegetation comes out of its winter hibernation. Pollen sprays fill the air and are carried by the wind and currents. But the event last night appears to be more related to naturally occurring red dust from the Southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Rain events can concentrate the pollen and dust into relatively small geographic areas, making them more apparent. This is what initial analysis has shown and is the most plausible explanation for the recent increase in yellow sheens.

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